



# CITY OF CONCORD

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

#### Minutes

September 10, 2010

7:30 A.M.

The meeting convened at the Red River Theatres on South Main Street. Coffee and refreshments were served compliments of Connie Rosemont.

**PRESENT:** Tim Bernier, Walter Chapin, Mark Coen, Peter Cook (arrived at 8am), Michael DelloIacono, Larry Gloekler, Stephen Heavener, John Hoyt, Connie Rosemont, Maura Carroll, Jan McClure, Christopher Carley, Byron Champlin and Claudia Walker

**ABSENT:** Allen Bennett, Dan St. Hilaire and Bill Norton

**STAFF:** Carlos P. Baía, Deputy City Manager - Development

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 A.M.

#### **I. MINUTES OF THE JULY 9, 2010 EDAC MEETING**

Byron Champlin made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Mark Coen seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#### **II. OVERNIGHT PARKING PILOT STATUS**

Carlos Baía provided a brief history of the pilot overnight parking program and explained that it would expire at the end of October unless otherwise acted upon by the City Council. He indicated that the Parking Committee chaired by Councilor Coen had suggested that EDAC weigh in on this issue. Councilor Coen noted that the City had expected this pilot was, in part, an effort to stimulate upper story residential redevelopment downtown. He acknowledged that the pilot has had some “bugs” which were to be expected with this type of transition. Councilor McClure inquired as to the status of the email notification system. Mr. Baía cited a recent report from the City’s Parking Manager to City Council indicating that the system is not as robust as anticipated. Originally, Concord TV was on-board to provide email and text notifications but they have since changed their providers and there is a system incompatibility. As a result, the email is limited to those within the City organization and others that may have been identified or approached the city to sign up. One such entity is Main Street Concord, Inc. which does issue its own email blasts upon notification from the City. Mr. Baía conceded that the notification area is one facet of this parking discussion that requires additional attention.

Tim Bernier asked where would those residents and guests downtown park during winter storm bans? According to Mr. Baía those vehicles could be left in any of the City’s downtown public parking garages.

Chairman Carley asked why the ban existed in the first place. Councilor Coen noted that it may have had to do with the delivery of coal to the buildings in the area and the need to

maintain access to the sidewalks. Mr. Baía also noted that prior police chiefs had cited that the lack of cars on the roads helped reduce the possibilities of crime.

Chairman Carley asked if anyone on EDAC opposed making the pilot area permanent. No one expressed any opposition.

Byron Champlin noted that one of the arguments for lifting the ban was that unless people were allowed to park on the street they would need to find another alternative which, in many cases, resulted in the paving over of residential yards. This comment led to a broader discussion of possibly lifting the ban elsewhere in the city.

Councilor McClure didn't feel that EDAC should be recommending such an expansion. She believed that such direction should first come from the residents in the neighborhoods that might be affected.

Stephen Heavener interjected that this is an economic development issue.

Connie Rosemont explained that she lives in one of the neighborhoods where this is an issue and would historically have to call the police department if they were doing something on their property that precluded the parking of vehicles on their land or if they had guests which was a burdensome process.

Councilor DelloIacono made a motion that EDAC recommend that the City continue to allow overnight parking in the pilot area and study the feasibility of expanding this area over the next 12-24 months. Maura Carroll seconded this motion. No further discussion. Motion carried with one vote in opposition by Councilor McClure.

### **III. Arts Incubator Space Survey**

Byron Champlin indicated that Creative Concord had raised the requisite funds to retain Artspace. This project will be different than what Artspace normally tackles in that Creative Concord has not identified one single property for re-use and analysis. Instead, Creative Concord wants to determine the feasibility of incubator space for creative enterprises from a variety of fields, not simply the traditional arts.

Mr. Champlin explained that the on-line survey has been finished and will be distributed on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The sub-committee is working to find partners to distribute the survey via internet links. He mentioned that if any member of EDAC would like to participate, they should let him know.

Mr. Champlin noted that the group may need at least \$5,000 more for incidentals related to this incubator study/survey. As a result, Creative Concord has applied for a CDBG grant through the City of Concord. The organization is looking for community support for this application in which it is seeking \$15,000.

Chairman Carley mentioned that the study should demonstrate if there is a demand in Concord for arts incubator space, if space is available and how best to utilize it.

Mr. Heavener noted that it is, in essence, a market feasibility study.

Mr. Champlin concurred adding that the study is not focused on one specific area of Concord. For example, they're also looking at the Smokestack Center on North State Street.

Chairman Carley noted that he has already been approached by developers and owners who have identified properties that might be candidates for use as arts incubator space. He further stated that he had spoken with the Mayor on this item who felt it was a great idea.

Mr. Champlin changed subjects at this point and noted that the next Artist to Artist gathering is September 21<sup>st</sup>. He explained that anyone interested should contact the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Champlin also mentioned that Creative Concord is working on a website that will be linked to the Chamber's.

Mr. Champlin stated that the League of Craftsmen has been very successful in its sale of tax credits. In addition, the League's board of directors is changing and becoming more development savvy.

Mr. Champlin introduced the topic of "buskers." He indicated that he had met with Jessica Eshleman, Susan Leidy and Carlos Baía to devise a way to successfully introduce these street performers to Concord. He mentioned that Creative Concord's public arts sub-committee is very interested in this potential program and will work closely with Main Street Concord to make a proposal for City Council consideration. Before it reaches Council, however, Mr. Champlin felt it was very important to have EDAC provide input. Therefore, the document will first be brought to EDAC for review.

Mr. Champlin noted that the preliminary discussions had talked about possible locations, means of controlling the program, etc.

#### IV. LAND USE REGULATIONS REVIEW

Carlos Baía explained that the recommendations from EDAC and Concord 2020 had received a preliminary staff review. However, Mr. Baía felt that there were still a number of points that were unclear and required additional cross-disciplinary discussion. It was his goal, therefore, to further detail the staff review. Mr. Baía apologized for the delay.

Chairman Carley asked if there would be an opportunity for additional public review before the staff comments went to Planning Board and Council. Mr. Baía felt that this was acceptable and recommended that the same opportunity be provided to Concord 2020. Councilor McClure felt that this was a good idea as she would like to see staff's reaction to what has been recommended.

Councilor McClure further suggested a joint Planning Board/Zoning Board session to review this material. The discussion then moved to conflicts between the Planning Board and Zoning Board. Tim Bernier noted that such conflicts happen in many communities. Mr. Baía indicated that a degree of conflict is inevitable as the Planning Board and planning by extension are traditionally the drivers that draft land use regulations while the Zoning Board exists to provide relief from these same regulations when warranted.

Larry Gloekler asked if there would be any financial consequences from any of the recommendations currently being reviewed. Mr. Baía responded that there might be.

## **V. Building Permits Information**

Peter Cook asked if there were any trends in building permits. Mr. Baía answered that there has been an uptick in residential interest, although not necessarily correlated to renewed construction activity yet. On the commercial side, Mr. Baía noted that the City has seen some interest in new retail and restaurant uses that is promising. On the restaurant side, the trend appears to be “fast casual” dining. As for retail, the smaller scale discount stores are doing well and looking to expand their market.

## **VI. Other Business**

Mr. Champlin noted that the recent passing of downtown property owner Vicky Zachos, while regrettable, has the potential to create new opportunities for downtown redevelopment. There was acknowledgement amongst the EDAC members that this was, indeed, the case with some already hearing of potential buyers for the property.

Stephen Heavener asked about the status of the Franklin Pierce Law Center expansion. Mr. Carley explained what the ZBA has sought in terms of additional information from the City and the request that the school meet with the neighborhood. Mr. Baía explained that City staff and various volunteer boards had reviewed the school’s parking arrangement and found it acceptable. This was communicated to the ZBA.

Mr. Champlin mentioned that he had tickets for the “Politics and Eggs” series. If anyone on EDAC was interested they should contact him.

It was noted that the next EDAC meeting would be held on October 1<sup>st</sup> at Company C courtesy of Walter Chapin.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 am.